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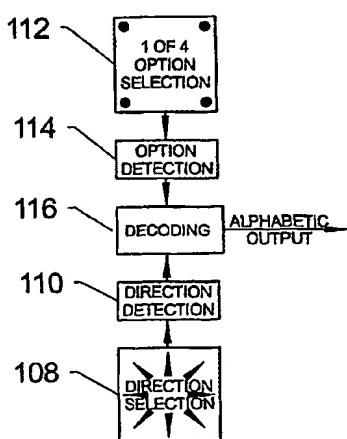
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(54) Title: DATA INPUT SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A data input system, with which a user can input letters of an alphabet, comprises: a system (112,108) for enabling the user to select one of four options and, for each selected option, to select one of eight directions; a system (114,110) for detecting the option and direction selected by the user; and a decoder (116) responsive to the detected option and direction and operable to interpret each of a number of combinations of such an option and such a direction, equal to the number of letters in the alphabet, as a respective letter of the alphabet. Directions may be selected by, for example, operating an eight-way joystick, making directional gestures on a touch-sensitive surface, or pressing different combinations of keys in a key array. Options may be selected by, for example, operating an four-way joystick, pressing one or more shift keys and/or by providing more than one direction selection system so that the user can select which direction selection system to use for a particular letter. Compared with conventional systems, the data input system does not require so frequent relocation of the user's finger (or fingers or thumb(s) or a stylus or the like held by the user) when inputting letters of an alphabet.

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